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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 001998

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [ECON](#) [ENRG](#) [IZ](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY-IRAQ: GOT PREPARES FOR PM MALIKI VISIT

REF: A. ANKARA 1990

[1](#)B. ANKARA 1985

[1](#)C. ANKARA 1337

Classified By: CDA Nancy McEldowney for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Turkey's primary focus during PM Maliki's August 7 Ankara visit will be on security-related issues. The GOT hopes to make progress on a bilateral security agreement, but does not expect to sign the agreement during the visit. The GOT will also devote attention to economic cooperation, including signing a pre-cursor to an eventual free trade agreement and discussing issues related to increased investment. Turkey remains committed to planning and hosting in Istanbul the next ministerial of the Expanded Neighbors process, and is eager to set a date for the Istanbul meeting. END SUMMARY

[1](#)2. (C) GOT Coordinator for Iraq Celikkol provided Charge with an overview of GOT planning for the August 7-8 visit of Iraqi PM Maliki to Ankara. Celikkol indicated Maliki would be accompanied by Ministers of Foreign Affairs, National Security, Oil, Science, and Youth, as well as National Security Advisor Rubaie. Maliki plans to arrive in Ankara the morning of August 7, remain overnight, and depart for Tehran the next morning. He will meet with PM Erdogan and President Sezer, and Erdogan will host a dinner for him.

PRIMARYLY A SECURITY FOCUS  
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[1](#)3. (C) Celikkol said the GOT's primary focus is on security-related issues, not least because the Turkish press coverage will focus almost entirely on the PKK. Celikkol indicated the draft security agreement on which Turkey and Iraq have previously exchanged language (ref C) will not be ready for signature. However, the GOT hopes to announce the countries' joint intent to sign the agreement in the near future. The Turks also are considering the idea of broaching a bilateral agreement that would allow for Turkish operations against the PKK inside Iraq (ref A).

[1](#)4. (C) The GOT will press Maliki for a public statement

affirming that the PKK is a terrorist group. They will also ask Maliki to use whatever influence he can on KRG authorities to take necessary steps to rein in PKK operations in northern Iraq.

15. (C) Celikkol emphasized that Turkey remains committed to supporting efforts to bolster Iraq's central government as well as Maliki's administration. However, he noted that Maliki was using his visit to Ankara, at least in part, as a balance to his Tehran trip, raising doubts about Maliki's commitment to establishing strong ties with the Turks or addressing Turkish concerns. Celikkol also expressed GOT concern about Tawafuq's withdrawal from Maliki's governing coalition and the serious repercussions the move has for continued Sunni engagement in the political process.

16. (C) Celikkol said GOT officials would suggest the two governments sign an agreement to bolster trade, a pre-cursor to an eventual free trade pact. He also mentioned the need to discuss continued payment problems some Turkish firms are experiencing with Iraqi entities. Finally, Celikkol noted the GOT's intent to sign a bilateral MOU on energy and natural gas cooperation and investment.

#### EXPANDED NEIGHBORS

17. (C) Celikkol asked about scheduling an Expanded Neighbors' ministerial in early September, and underscored Turkey's understanding that it will be held in Istanbul. He said failure to follow through on the Sharm commitment to hold the next meeting in Istanbul would be extremely problematic for the GOT. He noted that the Iraqis and the Egyptians had

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insisted on inserting specific language on Istanbul into the communique, not the GOT. To renege on that commitment, he said, would create a major controversy in Turkey and further complicate Turkish-Iraqi relations.

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